

My name is Annie Zonneveld, and I'm a 9th grade literature teachers at Achievement First Hartford High School. I'm here to speak in strong support of the Common Core.

At my school, we've already starting using a curriculum that's aligned to the Common Core, and the difference in how kids respond to it is amazing. At my old school, we taught a curriculum that was too easy. Students weren't being challenged, and they knew it. This seriously impacted them – they saw it as a reflection of what the education system thought they could do and where they were going. Too many schools today, especially those that serve lower income communities, are sending this message of low expectations to their students.

Now, I'm teaching using a curriculum based on the Common Core. My students struggle with the material, but they struggle in a good way. It's the kind of struggle we want to see. They're doing the heavy lifting, wrestling with texts and questions that push their thinking. This is how kids get smart. They understand that this is the work you do if you're going to college, and you're going to succeed there, and they respond accordingly.

If we delay the Common Core, we're not doing our kids any favors. It's not easy to get into college in the first place, and if they're competing against students from states that adopted these higher expectations, Connecticut kids are going to be a big disadvantage.

I know from my classroom that kids will rise to the expectations you set for them. Please do not lower our expectations by delaying the Common Core.